

# NOT EVEN PAST



## Climate in Context: Historical Precedents and the Unprecedented Virtual Conference



April 22-23, 2021

Institute for Historical Studies, University of Texas at Austin

As the culmination of a [year-long series of events](#), this conference brought together diverse scholars whose work grapples with the challenges that climate change presents to the discipline of history. Participants addressed precedents for this “unprecedented” crisis by uncovering and analyzing the historical roots and analogues of contemporary climate change across a wide range of eras and areas around the world. Can history offer an alternative to visions of the future that appear to be determined by prevailing climate models, and help provide us with new ways of understanding human agency?

To consult specific conference sessions, use the links below:

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  - Closing Keynote Address: Naomi Oreskes, Harvard University

## THURSDAY, APRIL 22

### Opening Remarks



#### [Daina Ramey Berry](#)

Chairperson of the History Department & Oliver H. Radkey Regents Professor of History  
University of Texas at Austin

#### [Miriam Bodian](#)

Director of the Institute for Historical Studies & Professor of History  
University of Texas at Austin

#### Land Acknowledgement

#### [Luis Cárcamo-Huechante \(Mapuche\)](#)

Director of Native American and Indigenous Studies  
University of Texas at Austin

#### Conference Theme Introduction

#### [Erika Bsumek](#)

Associate Professor of History  
University of Texas at Austin

#### [Megan Raby](#)

Associate Professor of History  
University of Texas at Austin

## Session I. Emerging Perspectives: A Graduate Student Roundtable



Mary E. Mendoza (Commentator), Pennsylvania State University

"An Upwelling of Stone: Climate Change and Infrastructure Agendas in Early Modern India"

[Jonathan Seefeldt](#), University of Texas at Austin

"Cultivating Parasitism: Early Modern Insect Crops and the Limits of Commodification"

[Diana Heredia-López](#), University of Texas at Austin

"Technological Ambivalence: Skiers and the History of Climate Solutions"

[Jesse Ritner](#), University of Texas at Austin

"Racial Capitalism and Climate Justice: Historical Perspectives on Environmental Racism in Texas"

[Micaela Valadez](#), University of Texas at Austin

"African Americans, Slavery, and the Long History of Environmental Degradation on the Gulf Coast"

[Brooks Winfree](#), University of Texas at Austin

Opening Keynote Address: Bathsheba Demuth, Brown University





"The Reindeer and the End of the World: Apocalypse, Climate, and Soviet Dreams"

Introducing the keynote speakers for Climate in Context – Bathsheba Demuth

## Session II. Historicizing Climate

Megan Raby (Chair), University of Texas at Austin

"Beyond Numbers: Knowing Typhoons in Late Imperial China"

Clark L. Alejandrino, Trinity College Hartford



"Degrees of Vulnerability: Why We Need a Feminist History of Climate Science"

Deborah Coen, Yale University



"The Anthropocene and Epistemological Colonialism: The 18th-Century Spanish American Origins of Humboldt's Global Histories of the Earth and Climate Change"

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, University of Texas at Austin



"Measuring Climate by Proxy"

[Melissa Charenko](#), Michigan State University & IHS Fellow



## FRIDAY, APRIL 23

### Opening Remarks

[David Mohrig](#)

Associate Dean for Research, Jackson School of Geosciences

University of Texas at Austin

### Session III. Contextualizing the Climate Crisis

[Tracie Matysik \(Chair\)](#), University of Texas at Austin

"Skin and Fuel: Some Episodes from the Fossilization of Whiteness"

[Andreas Malm](#), Lund University



"The Cene Scene: Modernization Myths, Navajo Coal Development, and the Making of Arizona"

[Andrew Curley](#), University of Arizona



"States of Second Nature"

[Victor Seow](#), Harvard University



"Gathering Clouds over Petropolis: A Prolegomena"

[Christopher Sellers](#), Stony Brook University & IHS Fellow



### Session IV. Practicing What We Preach: A Roundtable



Erika Bsumek (Chair), University of Texas at Austin

"We Use the Living Earth to Make Our Histories"

[Andrea Gaynor](#), University of Western Australia



"Rural Black Social Life in the Chesapeake After the 1933 Great Hurricane"

[J. T. Roane](#), Arizona State University



"Louisiana: Race, Justice, and the Ecological Legacies of the Plantation Economy"

[Justin Hosbey](#), Emory University



"Writing History into the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report"

[Paul N. Edwards](#), Stanford University



"Isn't all Environmental Humanities 'Environmental Humanities in Practice'?"

[Dolly Jørgensen](#), University of Stavanger



## Session V. Going Public with Climate History: A Roundtable



"Specific Constraints for a Universal Challenge: Navigating Resources and Space to Create a History of Climate Science Exhibition"



D. O. McCullough, American Philosophical Society

"When Will It Be Over? Water, Flood, Toxics, and the Duration of Colonial Legacies in Philadelphia"



Bethany Wiggin, University of Pennsylvania

"Indian Ocean Current"



Prasannan Parthasarathi, Boston College

"Modeling Virtual Angkor: An Evolutionary Approach to a Single Urban Space"



Tom Chandler, Monash University & Adam Clulow, University of Texas at Austin

## Concluding Remarks

Erika Bsumek

Associate Professor of History

University of Texas at Austin

Megan Raby

Associate Professor of History

University of Texas at Austin

## Closing Keynote Address: Naomi Oreskes, Harvard University

Introducing the keynote speakers for Climate in Context – Naomi Oreskes

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Convened by Dr. Erika M. Bsumek, Associate Professor of History and Dr. Megan Raby, Associate Professor of History. Presented by the Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

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[More Climate in Context, IHS & Public History](#)

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IHS Podcast: Hungry for Revolution

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IHS Podcast – Episode 3: “Apache Diaspora in four hundred years of colonialism vs ‘Toltec Antiquities’ Diaspora in Early Republican Mexico”

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This is Democracy: Shadow Docket and Abortion

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